

# Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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www.townscountyherald.net

Hiawassee, Georgia

## Indians lose competitive game to Nantahala

By Jerry Kendall  
Towns County Herald

The Indians led Nantahala for most of the first ten minutes of the game but saw the visiting Hawks use a 27-8 run the final 7:12 of the second quarter in overcoming an 18-13 Indian lead for a commanding 40-26 advantage at intermission. The Hawks extended the advantage a bit in the third quarter for a 64-45 lead with the Indians reducing the final Nantahala margin of victory to 77-64 by game's end.

Bradley Swanson continued his scoring spree of the night before, including eight treys this time in a sparkling 32 point performance for the Indians. John Bleckley also used the 3-point basket to advantage by including three among his 12 points for the game and Brandon Henderson took third honors in scoring with 8 points. Bleckley and Swanson also took the lead in assists with 5 each according to your reporter's tally.

**Basketball individual scoring PISGAH**

<i>Lady Indians (Grade)</i>		Jordan Moss (11)	12
Melissa Conrad (12)	22	Ali Bleckley (10)	11
Kerri Abernathy (12)	14	Brittany Walls (11)	11
Gabby Arencibia (10)	11	Gabby Arencibia (10)	6
Jordan Moss (11)	11	Lindsay Patton (10)	6
Ali Bleckley (10)	5	Sheena Kendall (12)	5
Sheena Kendall (12)	2	Heather Hamilton (12)	2
<i>Indians (Grade)</i>		<i>Indians (Grade)</i>	
Bradley Swanson (11)	27	Bradley Swanson (11)	32
John Bleckley (12)	16	John Bleckley (12)	12
Brandon Henderson (10)	14	Brandon Henderson (10)	8
DJ Rogers (11)	4	Rylan Albach (10)	4
NANTAHALA		Ethan Burch (12)	3
<i>Lady Indians (Grade)</i>		DJ Rogers (11)	3
Kerri Abernathy (12)	17	Dakota Barrett (10)	2
Melissa Conrad (12)	16	<i>Photos by Jim/Lisa Bryant</i>	



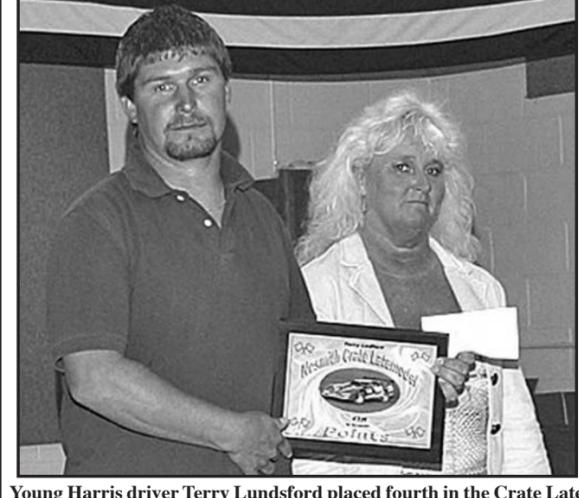
D.J. Rogers is hemmed in by three Nantahala Hawks in Tip-Off Classic.



Bradley Swanson blows past a Nantahala Hawk in loss to the Birds.

## Tri-County Race Track Awards Banquet

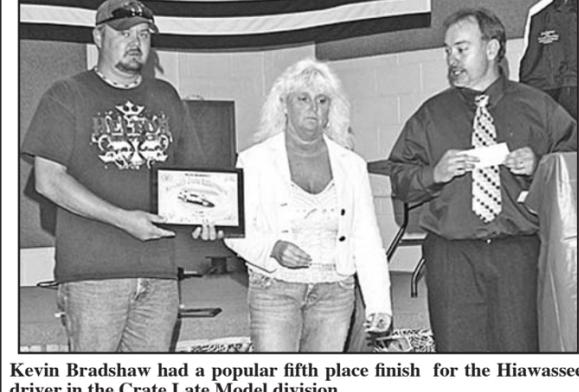
In last week's edition of Local Racing Action, photos of the Towns County winners at the Tri-County Race Track Awards Banquet mistakenly were omitted. Congratulations to these drivers.



Young Harris driver Terry Lundsford placed fourth in the Crate Late Model points.



Hiawassee's Steven Soffield won his second Street Stock Championship.



Kevin Bradshaw had a popular fifth place finish for the Hiawassee driver in the Crate Late Model division.



Driver Bobby Panter of Morganton, GA and car owner Kenny Garrett of Hiawassee, GA

Veteran driver Bobby Panter takes end of season Points Championship at TCR Track for 2009 in Sportsman Division. Car owner Kenny Garrett would like to thank the following sponsors for their support and another great season and another championship. Carl Patterson Flooring, Hayesville, NC, Hiawassee Discount Pharmacy, Brasstown Valley Resort and Spa, Hiawassee River Trout Lodge, Citgo Ameriventure Hiawassee, GA, BP at Cornerstone Hiawassee, Lakeview Store Hiawassee, GA, Vic Hill Racing Engines, and Texaco of Hiawassee. Thanks to Bobby for a great job driving and taking the Season Championship (as this was the first fill season driving the 33 GRT Car). Once again thanks to all sponsors and fans for your support throughout the 2009 season. Also a special thanks to David Garrett for all the hard work at the track.

## NASCAR 2009

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Fix Junior, And You Help Fix Nascar

As Jimmie Johnson was appearing in New York and on several TV talk shows, many fans were already looking forward to next year. While Johnson celebrated his fourth consecutive championship, his teammate, Dale Earnhardt struggled through a winless season. Many of his races were sheer torture.

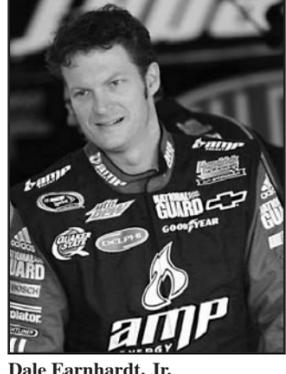
rick Hendrick changed Earnhardt's crew chief midway through the season, and increased engineering support to the No. 88 team. Although his performance began to improve toward the end of the season, on track problems left Earnhardt with very little to show for his efforts.

"I've seen this happen with Jeff Gordon ... you just go through these (slumps)," Hendrick said in a telephone interview last week. "We know we can make the team better and it's frustrating. The driver begins to think that no matter what he does, something bad is going to happen."

"My priority right now is the 88 team," continued Hendrick. "We've just got to be better all the way around. I think when we do that, when Dale sees that we've stepped up in a lot of areas, it will give him the confidence he needs."

Earnhardt Jr. has a zillion fans who influence TV ratings, attendance and souvenir sales. Their interest in the sport ebbs and flows with Junior's fortunes, and he has taken them on a dizzying roller-coaster ride the past two seasons. His struggles this season have shocked the entire NASCAR world because of the enormous name recognition and expectations he carries.

**Evernham Might Return To Old Job**  
Is it possible Ray Evernham, Jeff Gordon's crew chief might return to his former team? It's not written in stone, but Evernham is looking at returning to Cup racing in some form. NASCAR.com reports



Dale Earnhardt, Jr.

that he hopes to get a series of legal issues resolved in the coming weeks that may pave the way for a return in some capacity with a race team.

"Unfortunately for me, there are a lot of legal things going on right now. And there will be more legal things to come," said Evernham, who remains a minority stockholder in what is now known as Richard Petty Motorsports. "I'm not 100 percent sure what I'll be doing next year. Right now I have a contract on the table from ESPN -- and I love working for ESPN. I have a blast with what I do there. We'll have to see. I'm not going to say that I'll never be back over here. I just don't know in what capacity."

Evernham has made no secret of his desire to rid himself of his minority stake in RPM, which previously was known as Gillett Evernham Motorsports -- and before that was simply Evernham Motorsports, in which he was founder and majority owner.

"I've got some meetings next week. There is a lot going on where we've got to get some clear communication -- things that are going on and where I fit in all that," Evernham continued. "I own a percentage of everything as a stockholder. I am a stockholder in that business today."

Evernham has a non-compete deal with Gillett-Evernham that he would like clarified -- if not severed altogether. That could clear the way for him to return to the garage in some capacity with another race team beginning as early as next season.

### Logano Named Rookie Of Year

Joey Logano, driver of the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Chevrolet claimed Raybestos Rookie of the Race honors 26 times in 36 races this season. Logano scored his first NASCAR Sprint Cup Series victory at New Hampshire Motor Speedway. He finished the season with one win, three top-fives

and seven top-10 finishes. At 19 years of age, Logano is the youngest driver to win Raybestos Rookie of the Year in the Cup Series. Logano is the third driver from Joe Gibbs Racing to win the title, joining Tony Stewart (1999) and Denny Hamlin (2006).

### Bad Year For Roush Racing

Jack Roush is another team owner that needs to do some fixing during the off season.

Out of his five Cup teams, Greg Biffle's seventh-place finish was the best. Carl Edwards, winner of nine races in 2008 went winless and finished 11th in the standings. Matt Kenseth started off by winning the first two races at Daytona and California, and then he fizzled. Jamie McMurray did get one win, but he won't be with Roush next year. David Ragan, who replaced Mark Martin in the No. 6, has not lived up to his expectations.

Roush has moved veteran crew chief Donnie Wingo to the head of Ragan's Cup team, and Jimmy Fennig is moving to the R&D department, which will likely be a very busy place during the off-season, giving rival Rick Hendrick's dominance on the Sprint Cup tour this past season.

Ragan, after a promising rookie year, struggled during his sophomore season and never quite caught fire.

The easy-going Wingo has been the boss of Jamie McMurray's team, first with car owner Chip Ganassi, then Roush. Wingo is perhaps best known for his years with team owner Bud Moore and racer Jimmy Spencer.

Wingo and McMurray broke a long drought with a win at Talladega three weeks ago, and they will be under the gun right from the start in 2010. In fact, it'd be nice if they had something to take into the Daytona 500, to back up what the sponsor will be doing. Remember this is the sponsor that had Dale Jarrett for so many seasons.... and this is the sponsor that has watched arch-rival FedEx ride the wind this season with hotshot Denny Hamlin, who made the championship chase and had a shot at the title this season, while Ragan, still looking for his first tour win, wound up 24th in the final standings.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Where is the NASCAR Hall of Fame going to be located?  
**Last Week's Question:** Who is the former Cup driver known as "The Skoal Bandit"?  
**Answer:** Harry Gant. You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodgesnews@earthlink.net.

# BINGO

Andrews VFW Post  
Andrews, N.C.  
(828) 321-3901

## SATURDAY NIGHTS

Early Bird Game Packs- \$10  
Regular Packs- \$20  
Extra Packs- \$10  
Single Pack- \$5

Doors open at 3:30 p.m.  
**Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**  
*Everyone Welcome! Bring Friends!*